

County of Los Angeles  
Department of Regional Planning  
Historic Preservation



COUNTY OF  
LOS ANGELES

# HOW TO NOMINATE A LANDMARK OR HISTORIC DISTRICT



## What is the Los Angeles County Register of Landmarks and Historic Districts?

The Los Angeles County Register of Landmarks and Historic Districts (County Register) is the official list of local districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in history, American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. All of which are located in the unincorporated territory of the county.

County Register properties have significance to the prehistory or history of their community, State, or the Nation. The County Register is administered by the Department of Regional Planning.



*The County of Los Angeles Hall of Records (1962), located in downtown Los Angeles, is a rare high-rise designed by modernist architect Richard Neutra.*

Nominations for designation of landmarks and historic districts come from private individuals and organizations, or may originate with the Board of Supervisors or the Historical Landmarks and Records Commission (Landmarks Commission).

The Landmarks Commission reviews each property (landmark and historic district) proposed for designation and makes a recommendation on its eligibility. The Regional Planning Commission also reviews proposed historic districts for

consistency with the General Plan. Ultimately, the Board of Supervisors has authority to designate a listing on the County Register.

## What qualifies a property for a designation?

Properties designated in the County Register of Landmarks and Historic District exhibit historic or cultural significance and integrity.

**Significance** may be found in seven aspects of local and American history recognized by the County criteria for designation. A property must meet at least one of the criteria for designation:

- Associated with historic events or activities,
- Association with important persons,
- Distinctive design or physical characteristics,
- Potential to provide important information about prehistory or history,
- Determined eligible or is listed in the National Register or California Register,
- Largest or oldest trees species in the County, or
- Landscape or natural land feature associated with historic events, activities, or people.

In addition to one of the above, a historic district must meet of the following criteria:

- Concentrated or unified site with historic or thematic qualities, or
- Distinctive geographic or settlement patterns.

**Integrity** must also be evident through historic qualities including location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association. This means whether or not the landmark or district as a whole retains enough of its physical characteristics to convey its historical appearance from the period of significance.

## How to complete the landmark and historic district nomination form

### General Instructions

A Master Zoning Permit Application form must accompany the Landmark/Historic District Nomination form. Complete each section according to the instructions. The instructions are organized by the number and name of each section on the Landmark and Historic District Nomination Form. In order to adhere to historic preservation best practices, the County utilizes standards, guidelines, and bulletins published by the National Park Service. For additional advice and guidance on preparing the nomination, consult with planning staff and review the National Register bulletin entitled *How to Complete the National Register Form*.

The entire nomination package may not exceed 100 pages. Additional materials may be submitted on a CD or flash drive.

The term “property” refers to the entire geographic area being nominated.

### 1. Name of Property

Provide the name that best reflects the property’s historic importance or was commonly used during the period of significance.

### 2. Classification

Mark “x” in all boxes that apply to indicate ownership.

Private: Property owned by an individual, group of people, or organization

Public-local: Property owned by a local government, such as the County or public school

Public-State: Property owned by the State of California

Public-Federal: Property owned by the United States government



*Scripps-Hall (1905) is an American Craftsman style “ultimate bungalow” residence located in Altadena. It is the most intact example of the estates that once lined Altadena’s “Millionaire’s Row.” The house was built by William Armiger Scripps, descendent of a prominent family of newspaper publishers.*

### Rules for counting resources in districts

Provide the number of resources that make up the district.

Count all buildings, structures, sites, and objects located within the district’s boundaries that are substantial in size and scale. Do not count minor resources, such as small sheds, unless they strongly contribute to the district’s historic significance.

Do not count interiors, facades, or artwork separately from the building or structure of which they are a part.

Count gardens, parks, vacant lots, or open spaces as "sites" only if they contribute to the significance of the district.



*Old Ridge Route (1915) is an important example of mountain highway engineering of the early 20th century. The portion of the roadway extending through the Angeles National Forest was listed on the National Register of Historic Places (#97001113) in 1997.*

### **Determining contributing and noncontributing resources in districts**

Determine whether each resource does or does not contribute to the significance of the district.

The physical characteristics and historic significance of the overall property provide the basis for evaluating resources. Provide information about each resource, such as date, function, associations, information potential, and physical characteristics, to the significance of the property to determine whether or not the resource contributes.

The evaluation of integrity and the determination of whether the resource contributes should be made by an individual who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications for a

historian or architectural historian (36 C.F.R. Part 61).

A **contributing** building, site, structure, or object adds to the historic associations, historic architectural qualities, or archeological values for which a property is significant because:

- It was present during the period of significance, relates to the significance of the property, and possesses historic integrity or is capable of yielding important information; or
- It independently meets the County criteria for designation.

A **noncontributing** building, site structure, or object does not add to the historic architectural qualities, historic associations, or archeological values for which a property is significant because:

- It was not present during the period of significance or does not relate to the significance of the property;
- Due to alterations, additions, or other changes, it no longer possesses historic integrity or information; or
- It does not independently meet the County criteria for designation.

### **3. Narrative Description**

Provide a concisely written narrative describing the property and its physical characteristics on one or more continuation sheets or in a report. Describe the setting, buildings and other major resources, outbuildings, and landscape features. The narrative should document the evolution of the property, describing major changes since its construction or period of significance. Use common professional terms when



describing buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts.

Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location and setting, type, style, method of construction, size, and significant features. Describe the current condition of the property and indicate whether the district has historic integrity in terms of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Include specific facts and, wherever possible, dates. Districts usually require street by street description with a more detailed description of pivotal buildings.

The amount of detail needed in the description depends on the size and complexity of the property and the extent to which alterations, additions, and deterioration have affected the property's integrity.

The information should be consistent with the resource counts in section 2. Identify, in a list or on an accompanying sketch map, all of the resources counted in section 3 and indicate whether they are contributing or noncontributing. Also identify any previously listed resources.

**Maps:** Provide maps showing the property, if available. Sanborn maps help document the development of a district. The maps show the footprint of each building present when the map was drawn as well as other information on the number of stories, construction materials, etc. The Los Angeles Public Library maintains a catalog of Sanborn maps for the city and many outlying areas.



*The McNally House in Altadena (1887) was the winter home of Andrew McNally, co-founder of the Rand McNally publishing company. The residence is a remarkably well-preserved example of the Queen Anne style with Eastlake influences.*

#### 4. Statement of Significance

The statement of significance is the main argument for designation. It is important to substantiate facts with supporting resources.

Some general principles for writing a statement of significance:

In the summary paragraph, simply and clearly state the reasons why the property meets the County of Los Angeles criteria for designation. Add to the information marked on the form for section 4, by providing brief facts that explain how the property meets the criteria, how it contributed to the areas of significance listed, and the ways it was important to the history of its locality, State, or the nation during the period of significance. Mention the important themes or historic contexts to which the property relates.

Be selective about the facts you present. Consider whether they directly support the significance of the property. Avoid narrating the entire history of the property. Focus on the events, activities, or characteristics that make the property significant. For example, identify

significant architectural details if a building is significant for its design, or explain the role the property played in local commerce or industry.

Be specific in all references to history or geography. Give dates and proper names of owners, architects or builders, other people, and places. Keep in mind the reader who may have little or no knowledge of the property or the area where it is located.



*The former Golden Gate Theater (1927) in East Los Angeles was designed in the eclectic Churringueresque-style and operated as a theater until its closure in 1986. The vacant building was adapted for reuse as a CVS retail pharmacy in 2012, with many interior features preserved.*

## 5. Major Bibliographic References

List the primary and secondary sources used in documenting and evaluating this property on one or more continuation sheets, or in a report. These include books, journal or magazine articles, interviews, oral history tapes, planning documents, historic resource studies or survey reports, census data, newspaper articles, deeds, wills, correspondence, business records, diaries, and other sources. Use a standard bibliographical style.

## 6. Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive black and white photographs with each nomination form. Photographs should give an honest visual representation of the historic integrity and significant features of the property. They should illustrate the qualities discussed in the description and statement of significance.

## 7. Historic District Geographical Data

This section defines the location and extent of the property being nominated. It also explains why the boundaries were selected. Provide a brief and concise explanation of the reasons for selecting the boundaries. The reasons should be based on the property's historic significance and integrity.

For advice and guidance on photographing architecture and other historic resources, see the NPS bulletin entitled *How to Improve the Quality of Photos for National Register Nominations*.

## 8. Historic District Owner Consent

Written certification of more than 50 percent of property owners within the historic district is required to designate. Submit a signed petition or written support demonstrating compliance. See the sample form "Demonstration of Owner Consent" as a suggested written consent format.

## 9. Historic District Neighborhood Representative

This section identifies the neighborhood organization and representative associated with a historic district nomination. The County may contact this person if a question arises about the neighborhood or if additional related information is needed.

### 10. Nomination Prepared By

This section identifies the person or organization who prepared the form and his or her affiliation. This person is responsible for the information contained in the form. The County may contact this person if a question arises about the form or if additional information is needed.

### 11. Signature

This section acknowledges that all documents submitted as part of the nomination will become public records under the California Public Records Act, and will be made available for inspection upon request. Further acknowledged is that all photographs and images submitted will become property of the County of Los Angeles and the county has permission to use photographs and images received in the nomination package without compensation.

### Additional Resources

Architectural style guidebooks are available at public libraries throughout the county and include:

- *A Field Guide to American Houses*. Virginia and Lee McAlester. New York: Alfred A. Knopf (1990).
- *Identifying American Architecture*. John J.-G. Blumenthal. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History (1981).
- *A Field Guide to American Architecture*. Carole Rifkind. New York: New American Library (1980).
- *American Vernacular Design*. Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings Ames: Iowa State University Press (1988).



*Post-World War II, mid century subdivisions and buildings have reached the classification of historic (the 50 year mark). These recent history places and buildings make a unique contribution to Los Angeles County's history and the preservation of significant properties is important.*

The Los Angeles Conservancy is a nonprofit membership organization that works through education and advocacy to preserve and restore historic resources in Los Angeles County.

<https://www.laconservancy.org/>

Sanborn Maps, Los Angeles Central Public Library <http://www.lapl.org/collections-resources/research-guides/sanborn-atlases>

Building Permits, County Building and Safety Offices, Department of Public Works

<http://dpw.lacounty.gov/bsd/index.cfm?p=offices>

Building Description Blanks, County Assessor <http://assessor.lacounty.gov/office-locations/>

Site Plans, Department of Regional Planning <http://planning.lacounty.gov/>

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